than I have been on any day so far on the trip, so I'm getting adjusted.

But I find that if you have a very hard-driving schedule, then you get tired. But if you don't do very much, then when it's over, then you say, gosh, there's 15 things I wished I'd done I didn't do. So I think, on balance, the American people are better served by having me be a little tired the first 2 and 3 days and keep driving through the schedule and getting done as much as possible.

NOTE: The interview was recorded at 5:34 p.m. on March 27 in the Cape Town Hotel, and it was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 31. In his remarks, the President referred to NBA Chicago Bull Michael Jordan. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

## Remarks to African Environmentalists in Gaborone, Botswana

*March 31, 1998*

Thank you very much, Minister Kgoroba, for your leadership and your kind remarks. I certainly hope that our visit here will increase tourism in Botswana, not so much because my wife and I came, but because we brought such a vast American delegation and a lot of members of our press corps. And I think I can speak for them—this may be the only subject on which I can speak for them, but I think I can speak for them—they had a wonderful time, as well, and we're very grateful to you. [*Laughter*]

Vice President Mogae, thank you for joining us, and congratulations about your assumption of office just in the next few hours. Minister Merahfe, Secretary Mpofu, Ambassador Mogwe, thank you all for making us feel welcome. I'd like to say a special thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Kirby and all the people associated with the Mokolodi Nature Preserve for making us feel so welcome here. This is a perfect place for our meeting.

I thank the distinguished delegation from the United States Congress and Secretary Slater and AID Administrator Atwood; Reverend Jesse Jackson; my National Security Adviser, Sandy Berger, and Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Susan Rice, Ambassador and Mrs. Krueger, and our entire American delegation for being here.

And I would like to say a special word of thanks to the people who work day-in and day-out in environmental and preservation work who participated in our roundtable. And I'd like to introduce them. And I'll do my best to pronounce their names properly. If I don't, you'll just have to make allowances for me. They did a wonderful job.

First, the Director of the Botswana Department of Wildlife and National Parks, Sedie Modise; from Cameroon, the Director of the United Nations Development Program's Office to Combat Desertification and Drought, Samuel Nyambi; from Ghana, Professor of Zoology at the University of Ghana and Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, Yaa Ntiamoa-Baidu; the Resident Representative for Conservation International for Madagascar, formerly Governor of the Central Bank of Madagascar, Minister of Finance, and when I first met him, the Ambassador to Madagascar to the United States, Leo Rajaobelina; and the Director of the African Conservation Centre of Kenya, Dr. Helen Gichohi.

I think it's fair to say that none of us who visit Botswana will ever forget the beauty of the environment. Hillary and I and many of our party, as the Minister just said, have been reveling in the beauties of Chobe. And we do want to come back to the Okavango Delta. And we would like to see more of the Kalahari and more of the rest of the country. I think any human being who spends any appreciable amount of time in a uniquely pristine place, full of the wonders of animal and plant life, instinctively feel humanity's sacred obligation to preserve our environment. I have been deeply encouraged by what I have just heard in the meeting with Africa's—some of Africa's most distinguished and dedicated environmental experts as we discussed the challenges we all face in meeting our obligation to preserve the environment.

There are challenges on every continent. Here in Africa, deserts are spreading, forests are shrinking, water is increasingly scarce. The needs of growing populations often clash with those of plants and animals. People's health is more at risk as pollutants poison

water and air. And here, as everywhere, global warming threatens to aggravate droughts and floods and hasten the spread of infectious disease.

American children in their imagination often travel to Africa. Since I was a boy, we have done that. The essence of what attracts them and people everywhere is a vision of the most magnificent, amazing creatures on Earth living in harmony with unspeakably beautiful nature—the vision we saw realized in Chobe. That vision of, somehow, nature in all of its manifestations in balance with people living their lives successfully, inspires environmental efforts around the world.

At the Rio Summit in 1992, for the first time, nations gathered to proclaim that each country's stewardship of its own environment affects the whole planet. Africans and Americans swim and fish in the same Atlantic Ocean, breathe the same air, suffer the same health risks from toxic chemicals, greenhouse gases, destruction of the ozone layer. If animal and plant species are lost, we are all diminished, even if they are lost on someone else's continent.

Since Rio, real progress has been made in fulfilling our mutual obligations. Nations have banned dumping of radioactive waste. Nations are attacking water pollution, working to protect ocean life. We have reaffirmed the vital need for family planning. We have made real progress in reducing the destruction of the ozone layer.

But we must do more. And today, very briefly, I'd like to focus on three concerns we Americans share with Africans: spreading deserts, threats to species, and global warming. First, with regard to deserts, 27 percent of the African continent is desert—45 percent more, dry land, still arable but with limited water. The dry regions are rapidly succumbing to the desert, becoming wasteland, increasing the chances of famine and poverty. While climate change as a whole plays a role, agricultural practices—too much grazing, poor irrigation practices, too much tree clearing, failure to rotate crops—all these things play a pivotal role.

These concerns are familiar to Americans. One hundred years ago when our settlers moved from east to west in the United States, they believed they found a paradise of rich, fertile soil. They planted and plowed the land without any thought for the future. Then, in 1931, the rain stopped. Fields dried up. Our skies turned black. Dust filled people's lungs. Food was scarce. Thousands upon thousands of starving animals descended from the hills to compete with people for scrap. In April of 1935 blinding dirt blew 24 hours a day for 3 weeks. After all these years, that is still known to all Americans as our Dust Bowl. It was called America's Sahara.

We couldn't make the rains return; that was nature's province. But we could and did, as a nation, institute strong soil conservation measures that have helped to protect us since. And we had an agricultural extension service of respected experts from each local community working with farmers to help them see that it was in their personal interest to preserve our common environment.

A half century later, at the Rio Summit, with more and more arable land on the African continent turning to dust, African leaders pressed the rest of the world for action. The world listened and crafted a treaty, the Desertification Convention, to help stop the spread of desert and the degrading of dry land. The treaty seeks to empower local communities and to channel foreign assistance to prevent overgrazing, to grow crops appropriate to the land, to use existing water supplies more wisely.

I sent this treaty to our Senate for its approval in the summer of 1996. No action has been taken since, but today I am pleased to announce that two distinguished Senators, one from each of our parties—Senator Jim Jeffords of Vermont and Senator Russ Feingold of Wisconsin—have agreed to lead a bipartisan effort for Senate approval. And I will do my best to get it approved as quickly as possible.

In addition to protecting our land, we must preserve the plants and animals for their beauty and their benefit. As our participant from Madagascar reminded me today, the rosy periwinkle, found only on Madagascar, is a plant you likely would walk by without a second look. But extracts from this plant have proved critical to attacking Hodgkin's disease and childhood leukemia. It could have been lost entirely with no concern for biodiversity. A snake root plant found in

India gives a drug that saves lives by lowering blood pressure. It can be lost entirely by ignoring the needs of biodiversity. Beyond such medical breakthroughs, there is majesty in God's creation and the balance of life biodiversity guarantees.

Yesterday at Chobe, we saw some of Africa's most beautiful wild animals. I saw all the things that I dreamed of seeing, from elephants and hippos to giraffes and lions. But I also saw some animals I never knew existed before—the lincwe, the sable antelope, the kudu. I saw a monitor lizard. [*Laughter*] And I thought of all the people I would like that lizard to monitor. [*Laughter*] But, unfortunately, I could not catch it and take it home.

I saw the magnificent secretary bird, a bird I had never seen before, and watched it in wonder. I saw the lilac-breasted roller fly and roll for us, and I wished everyone in the world—every child in the world and every child in Africa, especially—could have a chance to see these things free from the want of poverty, free from any necessity of their parents to think about doing things which would undermine the existence of those birds and animals for all time.

The rest of the world thanks Botswana for its hard work to address these problems. Under the guidance of President Masire, Minister Kgoroba, Defense Force Commander Khama, Botswana has set aside large portions of its lands and parks, worked to stop poachers, promoted sustainable use of resources, is working with neighboring nations to protect rivers, ground water, forests, and other resources they share.

Because such efforts are not easy, they must be supported. This year America will invest more than $80 million to help African nations protect their natural bounty. And we all should do more.

Across the continents, nations are also awakening to the connection between conservation and democracy as local communities share power with national governments in managing wildlife and water, forest and farmland. When people have a chance to decide, more often than not, they actually decide to protect what is precious to their way of life.

The United States has helped to empower African communities on environmental matters and will increase our efforts with a new initiative called, Green Communities for Africa, based on a program already working back home. The program helps citizens in each community consider the environmental consequences of all kinds of local decisions, from disposing wastes to providing clean drinking water.

Finally, we must act together to address the threat of global climate change. The overwhelming consensus of the world's scientific community is that greenhouse gases from human activity are raising the Earth's temperature at a troubling, rapid rate. And unless we change course, seas will rise so high they will swallow islands and coastal areas the world over, destroying entire communities and habitats. Storms and droughts will intensify. Diseases like malaria, Africa's terrible scourge, already killing almost 3,000 children per day, will be borne by mosquitoes to higher and higher altitudes and will travel across more and more national borders, threatening more lives on this continent than throughout the world. No nation can escape these dangers, therefore, all must work to prevent them. As the largest emitter of greenhouse gases, the United States has a special responsibility to our own people and the rest of the world to act.

We are implementing an aggressive plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with programs for energy efficiency and clean technology. But it is a global problem that requires global solutions. We must reduce emissions in the developed world and promote clean energy development in the developing world.

Under the historic agreement reached last December in Kyoto, companies have strong incentives to invest in clean energy projects not only in the developed countries but in developing countries. The United States also plans to provide one billion dollars over 5 years to help developing countries to combat global warming.

Today I'm pleased to announce that NASA, our space agency, together with our partners from southern Africa, will conduct the first ever environmental review of this part of the continent, using satellites in space and ground surveillance. The results will provide a baseline from which to measure

changes in the environment, improve seasonal drought predictions, and help to assess the impact of climate change. We can and we must work together to realize the promise of Kyoto.

A generation ago, our leaders began to realize this would become an issue we would all have to face. President Kennedy said, ''It is our task to hand undiminished to those who come after us the natural wealth and beauty which is ours.'' In other words, the natural wealth and beauty which is ours is not really ours. It belongs to the people who came before us, who live on in our memory, and to our children and grandchildren and their grandchildren which will come after.

In the United States, many of our Native American population say that they manage their own natural resources with seven generations in view. They think, in other words, about how today's decisions will affect their children seven generations down the line. We can at least think of our grandchildren. We have a serious responsibility to deal with poor people in a respectful way the world over because everyone deserves the right to try to advance his or her material condition so that all of our children can have decent lives and get decent education and build a decent future.

But we know from the scientific data available to us today that we can grow the economy at a rate that sustains both economic well-being and our natural resources. Indeed, we know that if we maximize the use of scientific technology and knowledge, we can grow the economy and even improve the condition of the natural environment.

That is our responsibility. It has come to our generation to make these decisions now so that future generations will enjoy all the wonderful technological advances of the 21st century. But first, we must act, and we must do it together.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:45 p.m. at the Mokolodi Nature Preserve. In his remarks, he referred to the following Botswana Government officials: Minister of Commerce & Industry George Kgoroba; Vice President Festus Mogae; Minister of Foreign Affairs Mompati Merahfe; Permanent Secretary at the Department of Foreign Affairs Ernest Mpofu; Ambassador to the U.S. Archibald Mogwe; President Ketumile Masire; and former Defense Force Commander Ian Khama, currently Minister for Presidential Affairs and Public Administration. The President also referred to U.S. Ambassador Robert Krueger and his wife, Kathleen. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Statement on the Death of Bella Abzug

*March 31, 1998*

Hillary and I are deeply saddened to learn of the death of former Congresswoman Bella Abzug.

Bella Abzug was a great American and a true citizen of the world. Her conscience, intellect, and political acumen made an immeasurable contribution to our public life. She raised her passionate and tireless voice demanding the best for women, for all Americans, and indeed, for people all around the world. She will be sorely missed.

Our thoughts and prayers are with her family and friends.

## Proclamation 7075—Cancer Control Month, 1998

*March 31, 1998*

*By the President of the United States of America*

***A Proclamation***

While cancer still casts a shadow over the lives of millions of Americans and their families, we can rightfully look back over the 1990s as the decade in which we measurably began to turn the tide against this deadly disease. From 1990 to 1995, the annual number of new cancer cases for every 100,000 Americans dropped slightly but continuously. Perhaps more important, the overall cancer death rate, which rose through the 1970s and 1980s, declined between 1991 and 1995, a trend that continues today and that we hope will be sustained into the next century. Thanks to years of dedicated, rigorous scientific study, people with cancer are now leading longer, healthier lives. More than eight million Americans living today have had cancer at some time, and these survivors are